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SUBJECT: SE-20: PROBABLE COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO A "VOLUNTEER FREEDOM CORPS" (VFC)

(See Draft for Consideration by the Board of National Estimates)

THE PROBLEM

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To estimate the probable Communist reactions to the organization of a Volunteer Freedom Corps composed of units of Satellite Europeans attached to the US Army and under the command of American officers. This program for a VFC would be accompanied by an information campaign directed to the Satellites to encourage recruitment.

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1. We believe that the Kremlin will probably consider the organization of a VFC as part of a long-term US program to free the European Satellites from Soviet control. The Kremlin will almost certainly regard a VFC as another indication that the US is preparing to attack the Bloc, but we estimate that the Kremlin will not consider establishment of a VFC as evidence that an attack upon the Bloc is imminent.

2. The Kremlin ~~will~~ almost certainly ~~regard a VFC as an insignificant military force,~~
~~will~~ estimate that the US ~~will~~ not be able to ~~convert~~ a VFC into a large and effective military force. At least initially, it will probably regard a VFC as a system for the recruitment of agents. It will probably expect an increase of border violations and of espionage and sabotage activities within the ~~the~~ Satellites.

3. On the other hand, the Kremlin and the ~~Satellite regimes~~ will almost certainly consider a VFC ~~an~~ effective US psychological weapon providing a firm ~~guarantee~~ of US intentions to free the Satellite peoples. If a VFC should be used effectively in a UN action in Korea, or in some other local operation outside of Europe, the Kremlin would probably ~~estimate that such an action would further adversely affect Kremlin control over alarmed at the impact such action would have on the populations of the Satellites,~~ ~~alarm~~ in the non-communist world.

4. The Kremlin probably estimates that the ~~organization~~ of a VFC will be difficult, and that maintaining such a corps over a long period of time will constitute a hazardous program for the US, failure in which would seriously hamper ~~the US~~ ~~use to detect the intentions of the~~ ~~other powers~~. It may also estimate that the establishment of a VFC will increase the strains upon relations between the US and its allies and that the psychological advantage gained by the US among the Satellite peoples will be outweighed by the ~~the~~ disension created within the Allies.

5. We do not believe that the establishment of a VFC and the accompanying propaganda campaign will lead the Kremlin either to adopt courses of action involving grave risk of war or involving concessions designed to relax current tensions. However, the Kremlin will almost certainly appear more alarmed at US intentions than it actually feels. The Communists will attempt to strengthen the controls over flight from the Satellites. They will almost certainly

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~~relatives & friends~~ use terror against friends and relatives of members of the VFC, ~~if~~ VFC infiltrates members of the Satellite armed forces. ~~the Soviets will~~ ~~also~~ incite their restrictions upon ~~these forces, particularly the air force.~~ ~~The Communists will seek to infiltrate a VFC and to destroy it by terrorizing and intimidating its members.~~

7. The Communists will almost certainly reply to the US program with a heavy propaganda barrage, within and beyond the Bloc, ~~any the lines currently being used against the Kersten~~ ~~such as the UN, The Communist campaign will attempt to label this as a preparation for war and labeling the US action as preparation for attack.~~ ~~and to reduce the effectiveness of Western exchanges against the Communists.~~ The national Communist Parties of Western Europe, ~~will~~ give the VFC a high priority in their propaganda. ~~Outside the Bloc,~~

8. The governments of those Satellites whose nationals are organized into VFC units ~~will~~ threaten to break diplomatic relations with the US when the US campaign is announced.

~~These governments will~~ ~~break~~ ~~diplomatic relations with the US when the campaign gets under way.~~ ~~the Kremlin will probably use the threat of eliminating all~~ ~~US connections in Eastern Europe in its effort to check the US program.~~

9. If a VFC program should fail, the Communists would make sustained use of that failure to convince the Satellite peoples that the US was unable to help them and would lose interest in freeing them.